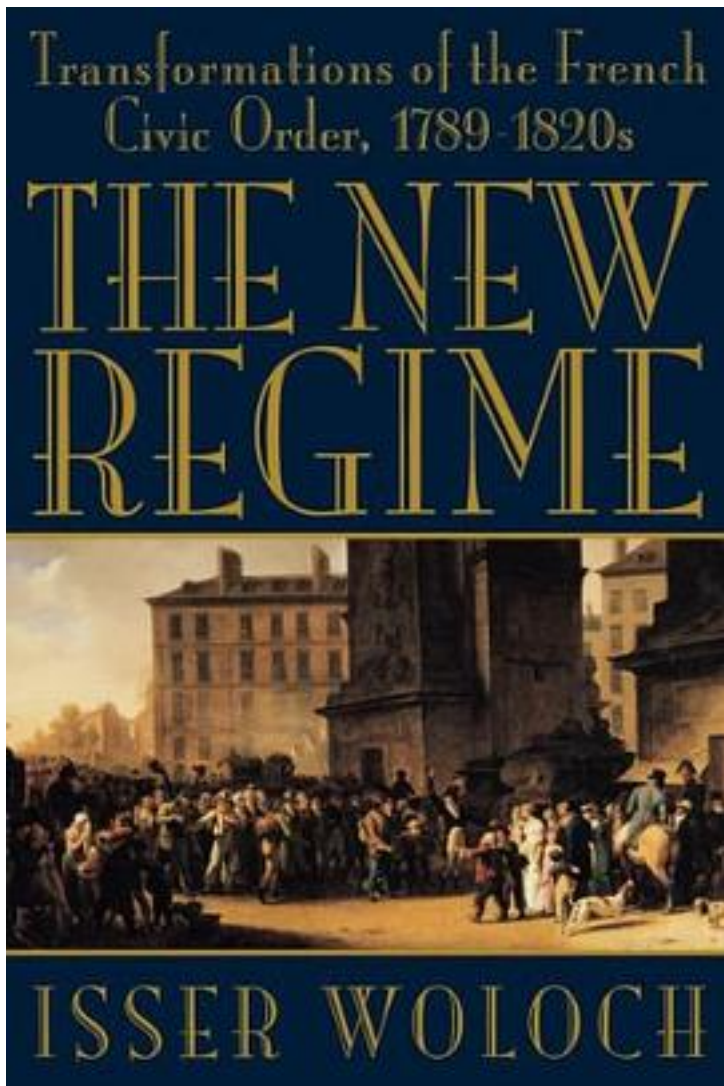


The New Regime



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Confident that they had broken with a discredited past, French revolutionaries after 1789 referred to pre-revolutionary times as the ancien regime (old regime). The National Assembly proclaimed the sovereignty of the people, grasping the reins of power and asserting the supremacy of law over all other interests. Even as the liberalism of 1789 collapsed into the Terror and then into the Napoleonic dictatorship, a new regime emerged at the juncture of state and civil society. The cycles of recrimination, hatred, and endemic local conflict unleashed by the Terror did not obliterate this new civic order. In this fascinating and wide-ranging study of three turbulent decades in French history, the eminent historian Isser Woloch examines some large questions: How did the French civic order change after 1789? What civic values animated the new regime; what policies did it adopt? What institutions did it establish, and how did they fare when carried into practice? Drawing on a variety of archival sources, Professor Woloch explains shifts in lawmaking and local authority, state intervention in village life, the creation of public primary schools, experiments in public assistance, a cycle of changes in the mechanisms of civil justice, the introduction of felony trials, and above all the imposition of military conscription. Unlike most accounts of the period, *The New Regime* moves outside Paris in search of the new civic order. Professor Woloch writes: "Imagine approaching a typical French town in 1798 or 1808 - the capital of one of the eighty-odd departments that the National Assembly created by redividing the nation's territory. The spires of a cathedral or the largest parish churches would still command the horizon. But as one moved about the town, one could readily identify its civic institutions: the departmental administration (later the prefecture); the town hall or mairie; the local schools; several new courts or tribunals; the institutions of poor relief such as a

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